
**Early Learning & Children's
Services Committee**

HB 2246

Brief Description: Providing for the delivery of educational services to children who are deaf and hearing impaired.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Haler, Fromhold, Wallace, Kenney, Dickerson, Morrell, Simpson, Conway and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the mission of and renames the Washington School for the Deaf.
- Directs the establishment of two demonstration projects for regionally-based deaf education programs providing services in the full range of communication modalities.
- Directs various entities to identify program development and other needs within the higher education system for supporting training and professional development for educators serving children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Hearing Date: 2/20/07

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

The Washington School for the Deaf (School) traces its history back to 1886 when the first facility was established in Vancouver, Clark County by then territorial Governor, Watson Squire. In 1888, the original property was exchanged for the site where the school sits today. In 1906 the School became officially known as the State School for the Deaf and Blind. Seven years later, in 1913, the School was separated into the State School for the Deaf and the State School for the Blind. Much of the current statutory framework for operation of the School has remained relatively unchanged since 1985.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In 2002, the Washington institute for Public Policy (Institute) examined various models of deaf education and service delivery and in 2006, the Institute studied issues related to the governance and operation of the School. Following that study, the Legislature appropriated \$55 thousand to the Institute for the purpose of contracting with a facilitator to conduct a series of meetings with stakeholders to discuss strengths and weaknesses of educational services available to children who are deaf or hearing impaired. The Institute recently issued a preliminary Report on Stakeholder Views. By June 2007, the Institute will develop recommendations to establish an integrated system of instructional support programs for children who are deaf or hearing impaired. Among the improvements requested in the Institute's preliminary report of stakeholder views is a designated central agency responsible for improving access to information and coordinating and expediting available services.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington School for the Deaf (School) is renamed as the Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness (Center). The Center is under direction of the currently appointed Superintendent and Board of trustees of the School. The governance structure of the Center will be the same as it was for the School.

The Center's primary functions will be to:

- (1) Manage the school and the applied research center/lab school to be established and located at the center;
- (2) Provide statewide leadership and support for coordination of regionally-delivered deaf education services in the full range of communication modalities; and
- (3) Collaborate with public and private partners in development and operation of an applied research center for training and professional development for educators serving children who are deaf and hearing impaired.

The powers and duties of Superintendent of the Center include all powers and duties currently defined for the School, plus the following additional duties:

- (1) Providing technical assistance and administrative support to educational service districts for the regional delivery of services to students who are deaf or hearing impaired;
- (2) Providing technical assistance and support as appropriate to local and regional efforts to build critical mass and communication-rich networking opportunities for children who are deaf or hearing impaired and their families; and
- (3) Participating with the DSHS in providing post-high school transition planning and programming services to students who are deaf or hearing impaired.

The Superintendent of the Center is directed to convene an advisory panel (Panel) for the purpose of implementing demonstration programs in two educational service districts (ESD) for the delivery of education services in the full range of communication modalities to children who are deaf or hearing impaired. The Panel will consist of persons selected by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the DSHS, the Washington Association of School District Administrators, the Governor, and the Board of Trustees of the Center.

Representation on the Panel will include the OSPI Washington Sensory Disabilities Services, the DSHS Office of Deaf & Hard of Hearing, an ESD superintendent, a school district superintendent, the Department of Health, the Department of Early Learning, and two nongovernmental entities. Selection of panel members must be completed by June 1, 2007.

The Panel will then set its meeting schedule and develop a structure for implementing regional programs at two demonstration sites within prescribed parameters. The Panel will select and consult with two ESDs, one of which must be in eastern Washington. By Dec 1, 2007, panel will brief the Legislature on its work and identify resources and policy changes essential for full implementation and operation of the demonstration sites.

The Superintendent of Center and the President of Washington State University, Vancouver will consult with the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and other entities as appropriate to identify program development and other needs to support certification and professional development of teachers, interpreters, auditory and speech therapists, and other professions essential to providing regional communication-rich educational programs for students who are deaf or hearing impaired.

The term "School for the Deaf" is replaced with "Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness" in numerous statutes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for sections 40 and 41, relating to The Advisory Panel, and the survey of higher education program needs for educators of children who are deaf or hearing impaired, which take effect May 1, 2007.